Juries - 1928

D.C.

1ST D. C. WOMAN JUROR ELECTED

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(Special)—Miss Phoebe S. Miles, 1405 Fourteenth street, northwest, has been drawn as a juror in Criminal Court, Part two, of the District Supreme Court.

Miss Miles is the first race woman to serve in this capacity in the capitol. The act of Congress on February 22, 1927, permitted women to serve on juries in the District of Columbia. She is a graduate of Armstrong Technical High School and of Miner Normal School, and is also a graduate in practical nursing.

Juries - 1928

1/21/28 Pittsburg Courier Pittsburg Pa.

IS FLORIDA AWAKENING?

Strange news emanates from the colorful state of Florida. If we are to believe newspaper reports, there has been an unusual gesture down there in the direction of fairness to the Negro. The Jacksonville JOURNAL is authority for the statement that "for the first time since Reconstruction days a Negro sat in the jury box in Circuit Court." Can this possibly be true? Is Florida actually about to take this unaccustomed step in the direction of democracy? Well, at least it has in this instance. But it wasn't done just out of mere goodness of the heart and sense of chivalry and fairplay. It was done because Negroes, through the N. A. A. C. P., have challenged the conviction of a Negro because no Negro had been called for jury service, in violation of the Constitutional provisions. The case against the Florida authorities is so clear that they have probably decided to start calling Negroes for jury service, in order to avoid getting into trouble with the Federal authorities. Attorney S. D. McGill of Jacksonville reports that "Two weeks ago a colored man named Anderson actually served on the jury in a first degree murder case."

This is a step in the direction of greater freedom for the Negro. We hope it spreads to all parts of Florida and the entire South. Statistically, Negroes have had a monopoly on crime and prisons in the South because they have been arrested by white men, tried by white men and sentenced by white men, and by prejudiced white men at that. In the majority of cases the jury box and the judge's bench have been used as propaganda stations for white supremacy. In the past the courts in the South have been used as instruments of oppression and the mediums through which white society received large consignments of slave labor. The same is true today. This oppression is maintained through the jury system in vogue: i. e., the selection only of white men for such service, which is the same as selecting a jury of Ku Klux Klan members to try a member of the Knights of Columbus, or having a jury of Frenchmen pass judgment on a German. So long as Negroes are kept off jury service, this form of oppression and slavery, masquerading under the name of justice, can continue, but when they are also chosen to serve the system will break down because Negroes will differentiate between color and crime, which, unfortunately, so many of our white brethren do not.

FLORIDA USES JURORS FOR FIRST TIME

First Time In History That Black Men Sit In Jury Boxes

N. A. A. C. P. IS CAUSE

Asso. Appealed Case To High Court On This Ground

NEW YORK—A fight being made in the Florida courts by the N. A. A. C. P. challenging the conviction of a prisoner because no Negroes had been called for jury service, in violation of the constitutional provisions, has caused the Florida authorities to summon colored men for jury service.

S. Decatur McGill, who has been attorney in the case of Abe Washington whose conviction has been challenged because of the exclusion of Negroes from Florida juries, reports that Negroes are now being accorded this citizenship right. Mr. McGill forwards to the N. A. A. C. P. a clipping from the Jacksonville, Florida, JOURNAL reporting that "for the first time since reconstruction days a Negro sat in the jury box in Circuit Court" while a jury was being selected.

"Two weeks ago," reports Mr. McGill to the N. A. A. C. P., "a colored man named Anderson actually served on the jury in a first degree murder case. Many of the colored people here do not know what it is all about. The fact of it is that the Federal questions presented in the Abe Washington Case now pending in the Supreme Court of Florida have caused the authorities to observe the serious objections that may be interposed in any case similar to the Washington Case and they have told me that the policy of discrimination in the selection of jurors in this county will be discontinued.

It is the Abe Washington Case in which Louis Marshall, member of the N. A. A. C. P. National Legal Committee, and noted authority on Constitutional law, has supervised preparation of the brief.

Juries-1928

SELECTING JURIES.

The attention of the public has been directed to juries holding forth in courts in many parts of our country during the last few weeks. The action of groups of persons who have heard important cases has been of such as to bring forth severe criticism of court officials, even here in our own city. In a California court, where the jury was made up of men and women, the presiding judge who heard a case against a man charged with violating the liquor laws, allowed the twelve jurors to take the whiskey into the jury room during their deliberations, and when the evidence was called for by the court, following the verdict of the jury, it was discovered that the whiskey had been consumed, all but three of the jurors having taken part in the drinking.

Certainly such a condition is sufficient to produce alarm and causes our court proceedings to appear in bad light. In this connection, the question comes to our mind as to why more Negroes are not selected to serve on juries, both in the state and federal courts. There have been times in the past when Negro men served with credit even here in our southern states. Just recently a Kentucky court witnessed the presence of a jury composed entirely of Negroes, and according to the officials, they served well. Too, in a large number of the cases tried in the courts of our land the defendants are Negroes, and in view of such, no discrimination should be practiced in selecting a "jury of their peers."

Juries-1928

Georgia.

Greensboro, Ga., Herald Journal

W/ FEB 24 1928

Negroes and Jury Duty

As we read the following news item carried in the Atlanta newspapers, the red blood rising in our veins make our temperature abnormal, therefore we attempt to write no editorial. Read it for yourself:

"Expert testimony to the effect that Mrs. Lillian A. McKie was a victim of 'transitory emotional insanity' when she shot and killed her husband in Augusta, Ga., on July 2, 1926, was expected to be offered in Superior Court this morning as the last gesture in behalf of the beautiful young widow.

"Two members of the jury hearing the case are negroes, the first ever to sit on the jury hearing testimony against a white woman."

The Superior Court is in session this week in Augusta and probably by the time you read this a verdict of some kind will have been reached. What do you think of an old Southern town like Augusta, Georgia, permitting negroes to serve on a jury when the life of a white woman is at stake? —Washington (Ga.) News-Reporter.

Mrs. McKie was acquitted. We have no adverse criticism of the verdict.

However, it is hard to understand why the jury revisers of Richmond County permit black men to remain in the jury box.

This has been the practice in Richmond County for possibly 50 years.

We have not heard of any negroes being in the Grand Jury box. But, to be consistent, if the black man is to serve on the traverse juries why not place some of their names in the Grand Jury box?

When black and whites are tied up for a week or more, which was the case in the McKie trial, it borders upon social equality. The jury must certainly eat at white restaurants. And, it is quite easy for ten white men to intimidate two black jurors in any kind of a trial.

We are not a negro hater. On the reverse we are tolerant of the black race as it is possible to be. But, we draw the line on black men serving on juries with white men.

The editor of this paper resided in Augusta when the black man was herded, fed and liquored for the purpose of voting him. He was carried to the polls by the hundreds, paid $5.00 a head for his free American privilege of casting his ballot. We recall where white men shot down white men in fighting for the black man's vote in Augusta.

But, times have changed. No black man is permitted to vote in the white man's primary in Richmond County.

Then, why permit him jury service, when he is denied his franchise?

We are absolutely opposed to the black man being permitted to do jury service for the same reason that he is denied participation in our primaries.

We know Richmond County is the only county in the state, where the colors are mixed on jury service.

Then, why Richmond?

Yadkin, Ga., News

FEB 23 1928

Negroes As Jurymen In Richmond County

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Wisconsin dairymen are shipping cream to Jacksonville, Fla., in car load lots. They live in nice homes, have steam heated barns for their cows and own fine automobiles. But they produce practically everything the cattle eat. They can only pasture their cattle six or seven months in the year. The Greene County dairymen can pasture practically the year around. It is all in knowing how, it seems.

—Greensboro Herald-Journal.

WASHINGTON, GA., Reporter

FEB 24 1928

NEGROES AS JURYMEN IN RICHMOND COUNTY

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—Greensboro Herald-Journal.

Juries - 1928

Indiana.

Colored Juror on Big Graft Case

New York News, New York.

Stephenson, Former Grand Dragon of Indiana Klan To Appear as State's Witness

WNJ Oct. 25 1928.

Indianapolis, Ind., Feb. 13.—The jury to try Governor Ed Jackson, charged with conspiracy to bribe former Governor Warren T. McCray was completed here today, shortly after court opened.

With D. C. Stephenson, former dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, enroute here from the State penitentiary at Michigan City to testify, the trial took on lively interest.

Only one man was needed to complete the jury when court convened. He was selected speedily and both prosecution and defense passed the entire box of jurors.

The most startling part of the selection of the jury was the choice of a colored man, Samuel H. Colbert, a farmer as one of the members of the jury.

Mr. Colbert, a highly respected member of the community was unchallenged and promptly took his place with the other jurors chosen.

It was considered probable the State would call McCray, now on parole to testify sometime this week. Attorneys for Jackson were expected to outline the defense based on the statute of limitations and Stephenson now serving life sentence in the penitentiary is expected to give startling testimony relative to the graft which permeated the whole state system of government.

Juries – 1928

First Local Colored Woman On Grand Jury

Mrs. Hattie Anderson, 225 Elm street, has been selected to serve on the February grand jury and will assume her duties at the convening of that body. She is a graduate of the Canonsburg High School, is an active member of the Negro Community League of this place, and claims to be the first colored woman to be called from Canonsburg to do grand or petit jury work.

Race Man Is Juror In Big Murder Trial

Among the members of the jury before whom Fayette J. Tyrrell (white) is being tried for murder is Frank Batch, miner, of R. F. D. No. 2, Elizabeth township.

The jury is composed of eight men and four women.

The Tyrrell murder case has created an unusual amount of interest in this vicinity.

Juries – 1928

Negro On Federal Jury In Tennessee; Pastor ME Church

Knoxville, Tenn.—(A N P)—Rev. W. A. Webber, Tate Spring, Grainger County, has been sworn in as a member of the present trial jury in the federal court, and will be called for service as needed in the trial of cases in that court. Rev. Webber is the first colored man drawn for jury service in federal court in a number of years. Squire Phil Eudailey of Dandridge, Jefferson County, was, perhaps, the last colored man who served on a federal court jury, and that occurred some six or eight years ago. Other colored men who have served on juries in federal court have been: Jacob Henry, Blount County, and Hugh Lawson Cansler of Knox County. There have probably been others.

Rev. Webber, who is now serving on the federal jury, is a minister of the M. E. church, and stands well in Masonic circles. He is the father of Mrs. Charles W. Cansler of this city.